

Recreation Options Public Input Summary

Public Comment Period June 7 to June 30, 2017

On June 7, 2017 the DNR posted the Draft Master Plan for the Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area to the master plan web site. The draft plan includes recommendations for resource and recreation management on the property. Including additional trails and remote camp sites in the Hodge Lake Area, a picnic shelter at the David R Obey Interpretive Center and a proposed paddle-in campsite on South Shattuck Lake.

A news release was posted online on June 7. It was also sent to media in Chippewa, Barron, Rusk, Taylor, Clark, Eau Claire and Dunn counties. In addition over 266 emails were sent to people on the CMSRA master plan GovDelivery mailing list. We sought comment from public participants, local governing bodies, project partners and elected officials.

A public meeting was held on June 20, 2017 to gather comments on the draft master plan.

Public Meeting Summary:

Meeting Location: David R. Obey Interpretive Center

Staff in Attendance: Dave Hladilek, Diane Brusoe, Rod Gont, Cameron Bump, Ann Freiwald

19 meeting attendees

Meeting Notes

At the recreation table, staffed by Diane and Ann, we heard the following:

- Meeting attendees expressed support for the proposed trail loops and were in favor of the additional remote camp sites.
- People seemed generally happy with the plans for the Hodge Lake Area and the walk-in access only to the old scout camp.
- Attendees were in favor of the proposed picnic shelter and the paddle-in campsite on South Shattuck Lake.
- Several attendees expressed concerns about the long term funding and support for the interpretive center building.
- A number of attendees had questions about the parking lots and which would be plowed in the winter.
- Several instances of confusing or unclear language in the master plan draft were pointed out by a member of the public.

At the resource table, staffed by Dennis and Dean, they heard the following:

- Property users are happy with the status quo.

- Folks asked why we are managing for oak.
- Some expressed a desire that the whole property continue to be managed passively (Their feeling is that no management of any kind is natural and best for the landscape)
- A few questioned how fire fits into the whole picture, and expressed fear that a prescribed fire might get out of control and cause a wildfire

Meeting wrapped up at 7 PM.

Comment Forms Summary

One comment form was received during the public comment period.

The commenter was happy about the plan in general, wanted to express how important the school group program is to the area and asked for more resources and staff for the CMSRA.

Letters Summarized

We received eight letters from members of the general public and one from the National Park Service (NPS) during the public comment period.

To summarize the letters:

- Most expressed concerns about the short and long term commitment the department has for the David R. Obey Ice Age Interpretive Center (visitor center) and for the staffed outdoor education programs currently offered at the center (for both school groups and walk-ins).
- Comments mentioned the importance of the educational resource that the programs and the center represent.
- A few mentioned the economic benefit of the center that draws visitors from around the country and even internationally.
- Many asked for more clarity on how the NPS grant is shared among the various Ice Age Scientific Reserves.
- The proposed partnership idea (to continue interpretive programs) was met with doubt due to the rural nature of the surrounding area and thus the lack of a pool of volunteers or donors.
- A misreading of the plan lead to concerns about the continued plowing of the visitor center parking lot (and even a concern about a “proposed gate”).
- Many expressed support for the additional camping and hiking opportunities mentioned in the plan and support for the proposed picnic shelter behind the visitor center.
- Some people expressed opposition to our proposed management of the property for oak regeneration, they are concerned we will be creating a monoculture and removing the diverse understory of the forest and there is some concern that the increase in oaks will lead to an increase in tick numbers.
- A few expressed concern that the proposed forest management techniques, including small patch timber harvest and fire would damage the resources such as the lakes, wetlands, ephemeral ponds and the scenic values of the property.

- A few expressed the opinion that the plan lacked vision both for the property as a whole and for the visitor center in specific.
- Some (including the NPS) felt the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve did not receive enough attention in the plan (the CMSRA is nested into the larger reserve).
- Two letters expressed the desire to retain the North and South Unit and the Program Center building at the old girl scout camp.
- **Emails Summarized**
- Although there are 24 emails in the project file only 4 contain comments within the email, most have comments in a letter format attached to the email. Three emails were from private citizens and one was from the Ice Age Trail Alliance.

To summarize the emails:

- All expressed similar concerns to the letters we received (listed above).
- The Ice Age Trail Alliance is also concerned about the visitor center hours, the department's commitment to outdoor education and NPS funding tied to visitor center hours. They also requested that we expand the project boundary to include a private parcel in the northwest corner of the property to gain a connection to STH 40.

Summary

The public comments indicate that they like the fact that the overall recreational opportunities and the "wilderness" feel of the property will continue. They are in favor of the proposed recreational facilities and the access to the Hodge Lake area. The public is concerned about the department's long term commitment to the visitor center and the interpretive/education programs at the CMSRA. They are concerned about our proposed forest management objectives regarding oaks.